

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR EG IS

SUBJ:ISRAELI JOURNALIST MAATY GOLAN PREDICTS

INTERIM SETTLEMENT BY END OF JUNE

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. DEPARTMENT MAY FIND OF INTEREST ARTICLE BY MATTY GOLAN IN MAY 29 HAARETZ PREDICTING THAT INTERIM AGREEMENT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT WILL BE CONCLUDED BY END OF JUNE.

2. GOLAN, REGARDED AS ONE OF ISRAEL'S TOP POLITICAL REPORTERS, OUTLINED A NUMBER OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND CHANGES IN VIEWS TO EXPLAIN HIS FORECAST:

(A) ALTHOUGH THERE IS NOTHING NEW IN ISRAEL'S DESIRE TO REACH INTERIM SETTLEMENT WITH EGYPT, TWO ATTITUDES WHICH HAVE GENERALLY ACCOMPANIED THIS DESIRE ARE NOW RARELY HEARD, I.E. (I) SETTLEMENT MUST BE ON SAME TERMS AS ISRAEL DEMANDED IN MARCH NEGOTIATIONS AND (II) IF NEGOTIATIONS FOR INTERIM SETTLEMENT FAIL, ISRAEL HAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NOTHING TO FEAR BY GOING TO GENEVA.

(B) TOP ECHELON OF ISRAELI GOVERNMENT NOW MORE FIRMLY BELIEVES THAT GENEVA CONFERENCE WITHOUT INTERIM SETTLEMENT WOULD BE DISASTER FOR ISRAEL. WHILE INTERIM SETTLEMENT IS NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR GENEVA, WHICH WILL BE RECONVENED WHETHER OR NOT THERE IS INTERIM SETTLEMENT, ATMOSPHERE OF GENEVA CONFERENCE WILL BE FAR MORE FAVORABLE FOR ISRAEL IF INTERIM SETTLEMENT WITH EGYPT IS CONCLUDED BEFORE CONFERENCE RECONVENES-AS CLAIMED BY KISSINGER.

(C) IN ABSENCE OF INTERIM SETTLEMENT, ISRAEL WILL HAVE TO PRODUCE A PLAN FOR OVERALL PEACE SETTLEMENT, OR RESPOND TO PLAN PROPOSED BY OTHERS. PRIMIN RABIN WOULD LIKE TO DEFER CONSIDERATION OF PEACE PLAN FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE FOR FEAR THAT HE COULD NOT BE ABLE TO BRIDGE DIFFERENCES IN CABINET BETWEEN POSITIONS OF MAPAM AND NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY, THUS GENERATING INTERNAL POLITICAL CRISIS. EVEN SHOULD CABINET AGREE ON PLAN, IT WOULD NOT BE TO ISRAEL'S NEGOTIATING ADVANTAGE. IF PLAN REPRESENTS MAXIMUM ISRAELI POSITION, ARABS WOULD REGARD IT AS MINIMUM, AND DEMAND MORE. IF PLAN IS INDEED MINIMUM PLAN, FOR NEGOTIATING PURPOSES, ISRAEL WILL BE ACCUSED OF ASSUMING UNREALISTIC POSITION.

(D) MOOD IN JERUSALEM DURING PAST FEW DAYS INDICATES ISRAEL IS WILLING TO PAY FAR GREATER PRICE FOR INTERIM SETTLEMENT THAN IT WAS IN MARCH. ISRAELI LEADERS ARE LESS INTERESTED IN SEMANTICS AND MORE CONCERNED ABOUT CONTENT OF AGREEMENT. ISRAEL WILL BE SATISFIED IF DROPPING OF MILITARY OPTION BY EGYPT TAKES FORM OF EXTENSION OF UNEF MANDATE, EITHER FOR INTERIM PERIOD OF AGREEMENT, OR BY AUTOMATIC RENEWALS FROM TIME TO TIME, THUS PROVIDING 3-4 YEARS OF QUIET ON EGYPTIAN FRONT.

(E) RABIN'S INSISTANCE THAT INTERIM AGREEMENT ALSO BE STEP TOWARD PEACE BY INCLUDING CONCESSIONS SUCH AS NON-PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMIC BOYCOTTS IS NOW REGARDED AS UNREALISTIC, AS EGYPT IS NOT THE ONLY STATE INVOLVED IN ECONOMIC BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL.

3. TAKING THESE FACTORS INTO ACCOUNT, PLUS TEMPO OF CONTACTS BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND JERUSALEM AND WASHINGTON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND CAIRO, GOLAN BELIEVES INTERIM AGREEMENT WILL BE REACHED BY END OF JUNE, IF NOT EARLIER. INCREASING EMPHASIS HEARD IN RECENT DAYS OF NECESSITY OF INTERIM SETTLEMENT MAY BE REGARDED AS PREPARATION OF PUBLIC OPINION FOR AN AGREEMENT WHICH PROVIDES SOMETHING MORE THAN WAS OBTAINABLE IN MARCH, BUT FAR LESS THAN WHAT GOVERNMENT WANTED. END UNCALSIFIED.

4. COMMENT: GOLAN'S OBSERVATIONS ARE INTERESTING.
THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THERE IS INCREASING
SENTIMENT EXPRESSED HERE FAVORING AN INTERIM SETTLEMENT
OF SOMEKIND BEFORE GENEVA TALKS AND MANY ELEMENTS OF HIS
ANALYSIS ARE BEINGWIDELY DISCUSSED BY OTHER OBSERVERS. WE ARE,
HOWEVER, SKEPTICAL ABOUT GOLAN'S CONCLUSION THAT RABIN GOVERNMENT
IS WILLING TO PAY A " FAR GREATER PRICE" NOW THAN IN
MARCH FOR THE SAKE OF AN INTERIM SETTLEMENT. LAST THING
RABIN WISHES ON EVE FORD-SADAT MEETING IS TO CONVEY
PUBLIC SIGNAL THAT GOI IS VIRTUALLY PANTING FOR AGREE-
MENT WITH EGYPT AT ANY PRICE. FOR GOI, THIS WOULD BE
UNTHINKABLE SIGN OF WEAKNESS WHICH WOULD ONLY FURTHER
REDUCE WHATEVER CHANCE MIGHT EXIST THAT SADAT WOULD
BE WILLINGMAKE CONCILIATORY GESTURE TO ISRAEL THROUGH
PRESIDENT FORD WHICH COULD GET NEGOTIATING PROCESS
GOING AGAIN.

5. WE NOTE, IN THIS CONNECTION, THAT IN HIGHLY
PUBLICIZED REMARKS TO A GROUP OF STUDENTS IN SAFAD ON
MAY 29, RABIN SAID THAT ISRAEL CONTINUED TO BE READY
TO ADOPT A FLEXIBLE STAND IF THE OTHER SIDE WAS EQUALLY
PREPARED TO DO SO, BUT "IF THE OTHER SIDE HARDENS ITS
POSITION AND ONLY WE ARE CALLED UPON TO MAKE CONCESSIONS,
THEN THAT AMOUNTS TO A SURRENDER."
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